



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

For Immediate Release:
July 30, 2008

Media contact: Eileen Force
414-286-2200

Mayor Tom Barrett today released a statement following the Common Council's passage of the so-called "wheel tax":

"Unfortunately today the Common Council voted to significantly increase the tax burden on City of Milwaukee residents by passing the so-called "wheel tax," a \$20 increase in the motor vehicle registration fee.

In a press release earlier today, Council President Willie Hines and Alderman Bob Bauman incorrectly categorized the increase as revenue from the state Department of Transportation. That is wrong. This is a tax on City of Milwaukee residents and will increase the cost of registering their vehicles from \$75 per car to \$95 per car – a 26 percent increase for every vehicle in a household.

While I agree with the need to increase our investment in local streets, I am opposed to a funding scheme that is totally financed by City residents while businesses, not-for-profits and non-City residents – all generators of traffic on City streets – pay nothing.

I do not want Milwaukee to become a "tax island" and I think it's unfair for residents to carry the sole burden of street repair when so many others benefit from those repairs.

I have proposed an alternative that increases the level of street paving at significantly less cost to residents. My alternative includes payment from commercial, manufacturing and tax exempt properties, all of which are not subjected to the wheel tax.

I will veto this proposal because it is unfair to raise the vehicle registration fee from \$75 to \$95 for only City of Milwaukee residents. At a time when residents are already grappling with increases in food and fuel prices, a 26 percent increase in city wheel taxes is not the road to go down."